



Safety Information 003/13

25I-NBOMe - POTENT HALLUCINOGENIC SUBSTANCE in NSW (N-(2-methoxybenzyl)-2,5-dimethoxy-4-iodophenethylamine)

19 December 2013*

Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Directors of Clinical Operations
- Drug and Alcohol Services Directors
- Managers of Toxicology Units
- Emergency Care Institute
- Directors of Pharmacy
- Mental Health Directors
- NSW Users and AIDS Association

Expert Reference Group
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Internet Website:
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs>

Intranet Website
<http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/>

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BACKGROUND

Recent drug seizures by the NSW Police Force were found to contain dangerous levels of 25I – NBOMe, an extremely potent hallucinogenic substance responsible for a number of deaths in Australia and overseas. People under the influence of NBOMe may at times not be aware of their actions, and their behaviour should be monitored in a medical setting (e.g. an emergency department) until the drug effects have subsided.

The NSW Forensic Analytical Science Services (FASS) Illicit drug unit confirmed that the characteristics of 2 of the 3 types of tablets in the recent drug seizures matched the characteristics of 25I-NBOMe.

In September 2013, 25I-NBOMe was scheduled under the NSW Drug Misuse Trafficking Act as a prohibited substance. Described as a psychedelic drug, NBOMe can mimic the effects of LSD (Lysergide) or DOI (2,5-Dimethoxy-4-iodamphetamine). According to the literature (and drug forums), it is active at very low doses and can therefore have marked toxic effects.

25I-NBOMe may be smoked, snorted or injected in powdered form. When diluted it is available in sub-milligram doses laced into perforated blotter paper or as a tablet. In either form it is absorbed sublingually. The tablets have 2 distinct logos and colours.

Speckled peach tablets marked with "Lightning bolt", Off-white tablets marked with "Louis Vuitton". The tablets are typically sold illicitly as "ecstasy". Therefore the actual contents are unknown to the user.

Example of tablets containing NBOMe



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Emergency Departments, Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres, Toxicology Units and Drug and Alcohol Services should be mindful that NBOMe may be presently available on the streets in high volumes and ingested by youth as "ecstasy". People presenting with symptoms of NBOMe should be closely monitored. This drug may be taken in combination with other drugs (e.g. alcohol, other stimulants cannabinoids).

Due to the extreme potency of NBOMe compounds, forensic chemists must also take great care to prevent accidental self-dosing during routine chemical analysis.

SYMPTOMS AND DURATION

Violent physical / mental episodes and deaths have been attributed to the abuse of NBOMe compounds. People seeking help at Emergency Departments following NBOMe intake may present with the following symptoms: confusion and difficulty focusing, scrambled communication, vascular constriction, shaking, nausea and/or vomiting, paranoia, fear and panic, out of control behaviour and possible seizure.

25I-NBOMe effects usually last 6-10 hours if taken sublingually or buccally (by mouth) but may last significantly longer depending on dosage. In some cases, effects longer than 12 hours have been reported.

Suggested actions by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Ensure this Safety Information is forwarded to the appropriate areas for action.
2. Ensure systems are in place to document actions taken.